

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 03089 032056Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 ACDA-10 AID-05 SSM-05 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00
/101 W
-----040412Z 115486 /23

R 031440Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5972
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 3089

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, MILI, IS
SUBJECT: PERES DEFENDS IDF IN SPECIAL KNESSET SESSION ON
COMTROLLER'S REPORT

REF: TEL AVIV 3045

1. THE STATE COMPTROLLER'S REPORT WAS CONSIDERED BY A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE KNESSET MAY 2, CALLED AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE LIKUD. REPLYING FOR THE GOVERNMENT, ALIGNMENT LEADER SHIMON PERES REJECTED MENACHEM BEGIN'S CHARGE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS COMPLACENT AND IGNORING THE COMPTROLLER'S CRITICISM. VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE DEBATE DEALT WITH THE MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE REPORT.

2. WHILE NOT EXPLICITLY CHALLENGING THE REPORT'S FINDINGS, PERES INDICATED THAT THE COMPTROLLER AND SELECTED FOR SCRUTINY TWO IDF UNITS WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN VOTED UNSATISFACTORY BY THE IDF'S OWN INTERNAL
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INSPECTION AND WHICH WERE IN THE PROCESS OF REORGANIZATION. SPEAKING AS DEFENSE MINISTER AS WELL AS ALIGNMENT HEAD, PERES DECLARED THAT THE IDF WAS ALSO UNDER CONSTANT AND CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM BY THE BEST INSPECTORS OF ALL: THE RESERVISTS WHO MIGHT ONE DAY HAVE TO USE THE EQUIPMENT.

3. PERES REGRETTED THAT SOME OF THE MEDIA HAD "VORACIOUSLY" SEIZED ON THE REPORT AS THOUGH IT WAS THE ONLY SOURCE OF ALL THEY KNEW ABOUT THE IDF. HE ADDED THAT IN VIEW OF THE ELECTION LAWS RESTRICTING HIS FREEDOM TO COMMENT OUTSIDE THE KNESSET ON THE REPORT, HE HAD AUTHORIZED CHIEF OF STAFF MORDECHAI GUR TO REPLY TO THE FINDINGS IN VARIOUS PUBLIC APPEARANCES. (COMMENT: GUR HAD COME UNDER PRESS CRITICISM FOR HIS UNPRECEDENTED STEP OF PUBLICLY ATTACKING THE REPORT.)

4. IN REPLYING TO THE CHARGE OF INADEQUATE STORAGE FACILITIES, PERES CITED FIGURES ON THE IDF'S GROWTH SINCE THE YOM KIPPUR WAR WHILE EMPHASIZING THE DIFFICULTY OF BUILDING STORAGE SITES FAST ENOUGH TO KEEP PACE WITH THE IFLUX OF MATERIAL: 60 PERCENT MORE WEAPONS; 40 PERCENT MORE MANPOWER; 50 PERCENT MORE TANKS; 50 PERCENT MORE AIRCRAFT; 55 PERCENT MORE AVAL CRAFT; 100 PERCENT MORE SELF-PROPELLED ARTILLERY; AND 1000 PERCENT MORE ARMOURED TROOP CARRIERS.

5. BEGIN, WHO WARNED AGAINST EXAGGERATED SELF-CONFIDENCE SUCH AS PRECEDED THE YOM KIPPUR WAR, DENIED THAT THE REPORT WAS A SLUR AGAINST THE ENTIRE ARMED FORCES. HE THOUGHT THE COMPTROLLER'S FINDINGS WERE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE: "THEY WILL PREVENT A DISASTER LIKE THE ONE THAT BEFELL US ONCE BEFORE."

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6. FOLLOWING THE DEBATE, THE LIKUD MOTION WAS REFERRED TO THE DEFENSE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE. THE COMMITTEE COULD CONCEIVABLY KEEP THE ISSUE ALIVE BY MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CABINET, BUT IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THIS WILL HAPPEN IN THE TWO WEEKS REMAINING BEFORE THE ELECTION.

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Sent Date: 03-May-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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To: STATE
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